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ABSTRACT

This study sought factors related to student retention by comparing characteristics of students in "poor" standing (academically-dismissed and probation students) during the 1994 and 1998 academic years at the University of Akron, Community and Technical (C&T) College with students in good standing. Initial findings indicate: (1) the percentage of students classified as being in good standing in the C&T college fell from 85% in 1994 to 74% in 1998; (2) significant differences in academic standing were found by race, with African Americans making up the greatest percentage of students in poor standing, followed by Hispanic students; (3) successful students had a higher mean age (28-29 years) for both academic years than students in poor standing (25-26 years); (4) only 9% of part-time students were in poor standing, compared with 13% of full-time students in 1998; (5) while DFWs (failure to complete successfully) of C&T students increased between 1994 and 1998, some courses with highest DFWs were non-C&T courses such as remedial and developmental courses and math. Recommendations include: (1) counseling, remedial, and developmental programs and instruction may need to be strengthened; and (2) sensitivity training for staff, faculty, and administrators is needed to address the needs of the growing minority, often economically disadvantaged, student population. Contains nine tables. (PGS)

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Academically Dismissed and Probation Students in a Two-Year College for 1994 and 1998

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May 2000

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The author would like to thank the members of the Community and Technical College's Student Retention Committee for their support in completing this project.

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STUDENT RETENTION COMMITTEE
REPORT:
FACTORS RELATED
TO ACADEMICALLY DISMISSED AND PROBATION STUDENTS
COMPARED TO ALL C&T STUDENTS
FOR 1994 AND 1998

Two academic years were selected 1994, and 1998 to study factors related to C&T's students considered to be in "poor" standing (academically-dismissed and probation students) to see if differences existed. Significant differences were found for some demographic factors and variables related to courses taken by C&T students. The study was initiated to make suggestions and recommendations to improve the student retention problem in the Community and Technical College.

Consistent with The University of Akron's student enrollment, in 1994 the Community and Technical College enrolled 141 more students than it did in 1998, i.e., 4183 were enrolled in 1994 v 4042 in 1998. Table 1 shows that in 1994, the Community and Technical College had more students in good standing than in 1998. In 1994 students in good academic standing represented 84.7 % while students in poor standing represented approximately 15%. Conversely, in 1998 the percentage of students in good standing dropped to 74.4% with 25.6% in poor academic standing. This discrepancy may be real, or it may be due to differences in the way in which the data were obtained and students classified. The Department of Institutional Research is currently reviewing this question.

Table 1 1994 v 1998 Community and Technical College's Academically Dismissed/ Probation Students

	No. of Students 1994	No. of Students 1998
Poor Standing	640 (15.30%)	1035 (25.6%)
Good Standing	3543 (84.7%)	3007 (74.4%)
Total Students	4183	4042

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Next, Table 2 shows C&T students for 1994 and 1998 who were academically dismissed/probation by gender. A statistically significant difference was found for gender for 1994, but not for 1998. The percentage of males in poor standing was greater than for females for both years. In 1994 males in poor standing comprised 16.9%

compared to 13.92% females. The probability level was .008. In 1998 similar results were found. The percentage of males in poor standing was 26.3% compared to 25% for females. The probability level was 0.334.

Table 2 1994 v 1998 Community and Technical College's Academically Dismissed/Probation Students by Gender

	1994		1998	
	Females	Male	Female	Male
Poor Standing	312 (13.92%)	328 (16.9%)	551 (25%)	484 (26.33%)
Good Standing	1930 (86.83%)	1613 (83.1%)	1653 (75%)	1354 (25%)
Total	2242	1941	2204	1838

Table 3 shows C&T students who were academically dismissed/probation by race. In 1994 a chi-square test technique found significant difference for race of students. At 32.38% or 191 of the 397 enrolled, African Americans made up the greatest percentage of students in poor standing. American Indians had the lowest percentage of students in poor academic standing.

Table 3 1994 Community and Technical College's Academically Dismissed/Probation Students by Race

Race	American Indian	White	Asian	Hispanic	African American
Poor Standing	5 (11.63%)	402 (12.04%)	6 (23.08%)	8 (22.86%)	191 (32.48%)
Good Standing	38 (88.37%)	2938 (87.96%)	20 (76.92%)	27 (77.14%)	397 (67.52%)
TOTAL	43	3340	26	35	588

Table 4 shows C&T's academically dismissed/probation students by race for 1998. In 1998 a chi-square test technique found significant differences for race of students. In 1998, the percentage for all students by race who were in academic poor standing or dismissed/probation was higher than 1994. However, the percentage of minority student groups who were in academic poor standing was alarming. Nearly one half of all African American students who enrolled in the Community and Technical College in 1998 were classified as being in academic trouble. The results in Table 4 show that 48.2% or 425 of the total 882 African American student body were in poor standing. The next highest percentage of students in poor standing was Hispanics. In 1998, 40% or 10 of 25 of the Hispanic students were found to be in poor standing. Asian students had a rather high rate of students in poor standing; 28.3% or 13 of 46 students were in academic trouble. Similar to 1994 results, the lowest percentage, for all students who were in poor standing was the American Indian. American Indians percent of student in poor academic standing was 15.2% or 5 out the 33 enrolled in the C&T College. The chi square test showed a significant association between student status and race for the 1998 year (P=0.000).

Table 4 1998 Community and Technical College's Academically Dismissed/Probation Students by Race

Race	American Indian	White	Asian	Hispanic	African American
Poor Standing	5 (1515%)	566 (19.23)	13 (28.26)	10 (40.0%)	425 (48.19%)
Good Standing	28 (84.85%)	2377 (80.77%)	33 (71.74%)	15 (60.00%)	457 (51.81%)
TOTAL	33	2943	46	25	882

Table 5 shows that significant differences existed between Academically Dismissed/Probation students and those in good standing, with respect to age for both 1994 and 1998. The result shows that successful students had a higher mean age for both academic years. The mean age for students in poor academic standing was 24.91 in 1994 compared to 28.26 for those in good standing. In 1998 very little change was noted. In 1998 the mean age for students in poor academic standing was 25.83 compared to 28.72 in good standing. T-tests showed that the differences were statistically significant, with probability levels of 0.000 for both years.

Table 5 Community and Technical College's Academically Dismissed Probation Students for 1994 and 1998 compared to all students by Age

	1994		1998	
	Number	Mean Age	Number	Mean Age
Good Standing	3541	28.26	3007	28.72
Poor Standing	640	24.91	1035	25.83

1994: Probability –0.000, Df. 1034, 1998: Probability P=0.000, Df. 2042

The next factor was the full-time v part-time students who were classified in poor standing. Significant differences were found for 1994 and 1998. The percentage of students in poor standing was lower for part-time students than full-time. Table 6 shows that only 6.02% or 136 of the 2259 part-time students were in poor standing v. 10.75% or 171 for 1,571 full time students. A chi-square test technique was run and the probability level was 0.000.

In 1998 significant differences were found between student poor academic standing when compared to all students. Table 6 shows that in 1998 part-time students had a greater representation for good standing than full-time students: 8.54% or 162 of the 1896 part-time students were in poor academic standing v 13.22% or 194 of the 1467 full-time students.

Table 6 1998 Community and Technical College's Academically Dismissed/Probation Students by Full Time v. part-time Status

	1994		1998	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full Time	Part-time
Poor Standing	171 (10.75%)	136 (6.02%)	194 (13.22%)	162 (8.54%)
Good Standing	1420 (89.25%)	2123 (93.98%)	1273 (86.78%)	1734 (91.46%)
Total	1571	2259	1467	1896

Some data are missing for both years: N=3850 for 1994 N=3363 for 1998

Table 7 shows that the percentage of students who were in academic trouble was less for the Wayne Campus compared to the Main campus for both 1994 and 1998. In 1994, the Wayne Campus had only 3.10% or 14 of its student population who were in academic trouble compared to 8.57% or 292 at the Main Campus. In 1998 Wayne Campus had 6.07% or 33 students in poor standing v 11.60% or 321 for the Main Campus. When a chi-square test technique was run, significant differences were found. The probability level of 0.000 was found for both 1994 and 1998.

Table 7 1994 v. 1998 Community and Technical College's Academically Dismissed/ Probation Students compared to Wayne Campus and those enrolled on both Campuses

	1994			1998		
Campus	Main	Wayne	Both	Main	Wayne	Both
Poor Standing	292 (8. 7%)	14 (3.1%)	1 (3.3%)	321 (11.6%)	33 (6.1%)	2 (3.9%)
Good Standing	3076 (91.3%)	438 (96.9%)	29 (96.7%)	2447 (88.4%)	511 (93.9%)	49 (96.1%)
Total	3368	452	30	2768	544	51

Data are missing for this category for both years: N=3850 for 1994, and N=3363 for 1998

Table 8 shows that students had DFWs in five classes at fifty percent over. In 1994, all courses in the high percentage range for the greatest number of DFWs were math or math related. Another significant point is that three developmental and remedial courses surfaced as problematic; Basic Math I and II, and College Reading.

Table 8 1994 Courses with the Most DFWs by Community and Technical College Students

Rank	Course Number	Course Name	Number Enrolled	Number of DFW's	% of DFWs
#1	3450-145	College Algebra	26 Math Department	18	69.23%
#2	2940-121	Technical Drawing I	67	43	64.18%
#3	3450-100	Preparatory Mathematics	36 Math Department	21	58.33%
#4	2030-152	Elements of Math II	193	109	56.48%
#5	2030-153	Elements of Math III	84	42	50.00%
#7	1020-052	Basic Math II	120	57	47.50%
#8	2030-151	Elements of Math I	154	56	36.36%
#9	1020-062	College Reading and Study Skill	79 Remedial Course	27	34.18%
#10	1020-050	Basic Math 1	173 Remedial Course	70	40.5%

Table 9 shows that in 1998 a higher number of courses were problematic for C&T College students compared to 1994. Courses with the greatest percentage of DFWs were in the category of math or math related, developmental and remedial, and those that required a high level of reading such as Introduction to Psychology or Introduction to Criminal Justice. In addition, the Business English course surfaced as a problematic.

Table 9 1998 Courses with the Most D-F-W's by Community and Technical College Students

Rank	Course Number	Course Name	No. Enrolled	No of DFWS	% of DFWS	Status of Courses compared to 1994
#1	3450-145	College Algebra	23 Math Department	16	69.57%	Also, high for 1994
#2	2940-121	Technical Drawing I	43	26	60.47%	Also, 2nd highest in 1994
#3	3450-100	Preparatory Mathematics	49 Math Department	26	53.06%	% less than 1994
#4	2030-153	Elements of Math III	63	33	52.38%	% increase from 1994
#5	2030-152	Elements of Math II	153	74	48.37%	% less than for 1994
#6	1050-052	Basic Math I	120 Remedial	58	48.33%	% greater than 1994
#7	1020-062	College Reading and Study Skills	84 Remedial	38	45.24%	% increase from 1994
#8	3750-100	Intro to Psychology	84 Dept. of Psychology	37	44.05%	Not in 1994
#9	1020-050	Basic Math I	142	61	42.96%	% greater than in 1994
#10	2440-121	Into: Logic/Programming	56	24	42.86%	Not in 1994
#11	2220-100	Introduction to Criminal Justice	114	48	42.11%	Not in 1994
#12	2540-119	Business English	178	69	38.76%	Not in 1994
#13	2030-151	Elements of Math I	131	49	37.40%	% greater than in 1994
#14	2040-274	Survey of Basic Economics	137	47	34.31%	Not in 1994
#15	3250-200	Princ of Microeconomics	56 Department of Economics	19	33.93%	Not in 1994
#16	1100-101	University Orientation	92 Remedial	28	30.43%	Not in 1994

* University College is tracking the performance of student's academic performance for this class.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Student enrollment fell in the C&T College from 1994 to 1998 consistent with The University of Akron's Enrollment.

2. The percentage of students classified as being in good standing in the C&T College fell from 84.7% in 1994 to 74.4% in 1998.

3. The percentage of part-time students in good standing in 1994 and 1998 exceeded the percentage of full-time students for that same period.

4. Wayne Campus (suburban campus) had a greater percentage of students in good standing than the Main Campus for both 1994 and 1998.

5. While the overall total minority student population increased from 692 in 1994 to 986 in 1998 the number of students classified in poor standing also increased. The most alarming increase of students who were classified in poor standing related to African American students; in 1998 nearly one of every two African American students was classified as being in poor academic standing. It is important to note that Hispanic and American Indian student population decreased. Significant differences were found by race.

6. The number of courses taken by C&T students with over thirty percent of the student population classified as receiving DFWs rose by a wide margin from 1994-1998.

7. Some courses with the greatest DFWs (failure of students to complete successfully) are not housed in the Community and Technical College but rather in Developmental Programs and the Math Department.

8. C&T students enrolled in Remedial and Developmental Courses earned a high percentage of DFWs especially in 1998.

9. C&T Students enrolled in C&T math related courses had the highest percentage of DFW's.

RECOMMENDATIONS
In response to each Conclusion
National Research supports many of the Recommendations offered

RECOMMENDATION #1 for CONCLUSION #1

- A full-time or part-time Enrollment Manager/Coordinator is needed to address the student retention needs of the C&T College.

RECOMMENDATION #2 for CONCLUSION #2

- C&T must strengthen support services such as remedial and tutorial programs in order to help students succeed.

A grant is needed to help offset the cost of support services similar to the Program in The College of Nursing (The Department of Engineering Technology is currently working on this initiative)

RECOMMENDATION #3 for CONCLUSION #3

- Freshman Talkback sessions are needed to gather input from these students since they may be the greater representation among full-time students than part-time students.

- Remedial and developmental programs may need to be strengthened.

RECOMMENDATION #4 for CONCLUSION #4

- Wayne Campus may have more support services such as remedial and developmental programs than the Main Campus
- Wayne Campus' student body is more homogeneous.

RECOMMENDATION FOR #5 CONCLUSION #5

- Remedial and developmental programs should be evaluated for their effectiveness. Existing programs may need to be strengthened. Assistance with Math is essential to the success in C&T college and for articulation to other UA Colleges.
- Reading Skill Programs are critical to success in all C&T Courses and to other Colleges
- Experts in teaching of Math may be needed to train professors in the C&T College on successful teaching methodologies (The Uof A College of Education may be a considered as a facilitator of training).
- Professional Development Program is needed for sensitivity training for Staff, Faculty, and Administrators to address the needs of the increase in minority student enrollment effectively.
- A multicultural enrollment management program is needed to address systemic changes in curriculum to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse student population, including language and culture.
- A Recruitment and retention initiative is needed at the University level to hire more professional minorities to help with the transition of the rising increase of minority students. Minority professionals are able to interact with and influence

at-risk students to achieve academic success. Recruitment and Retention is needed for Staff Faculty and Administrators.

- Contract Professionals who have expertise in the field of multicultural training is needed to host workshops in the C&T College for Administrators, Faculty, and Staff.

RECOMMENDATION #6 for CONCLUSION #6 – 9

- Department of Developmental Services, Department of Math, University College, and other departments with a high percentage of C&T College students who received DFW's should be notified of the results of this study. Relatedly, every effort should be made to work with these departments to help us identify problems.

- Graduate assistants assigned to C&T College may be utilized as learning facilitators (tutors) for struggling students.

- Remedial and developmental programs may need to be reviewed and possibly strengthened especially for English and Math skills. For the increasing number of foreign students, language skills need to be addressed.

- Consider Pre-Tests to provide early diagnosis of underprepared students and make recommendations to students on how they may obtain assistance outside of the classroom to supplement classroom teaching.

- C&T faculty members who have courses with a high level of failure should consider providing review sheets to students to help them focus on course material upon which they will be tested.

- Utilize the services of the Developmental Services in the Polsky Building especially for Math and English courses.

- Work closer with the Department of Developmental Department to help identify students who are underprepared as quickly as possible. Then make recommendations quickly in order that the developmental process can be completed expeditiously.

- Consider Supplemental Instruction in the classroom as one way to help students succeed. Supplemental Instructors (tutors) should be free through Developmental Services. Graduate students could be used in this capacity.

- Consider changing test and evaluation methods in the classroom with more frequent quizzes, especially for Math and English courses. Also, all instructors should assign homework regularly.

- Survey students at mid-point with open-ended questions on what they perceive to be problematic areas in the course.

- Faculty members should consider alternative evaluation test techniques to diagnosis problems; for example, instructors should be flexible with students, providing second or even more chances to master material.

Final Conclusions:

In order to address retention adequately, we need data pertaining to the "why" issues. Why are some students successful and other not successful? Is it mostly talent or aptitude? Prior preparation? Study skills? Other responsibilities that take time and energy away from academics? Work ethic? Motivation? Ways of Learning? Social Support for learning? What impact does socioeconomic status have on academic achievement?

Any or all of these questions need to be addressed. In particular, the principal researcher suggests that poverty impacts greatly on classroom performance. For example, in her classroom, some students are literally unable to purchase required textbooks until two or even three weeks into the semester. Although she makes every effort to accommodate these students, some instructors may not be receptive to such a situation. These faculty may lack the sensitivity and empathy to relate to economically disadvantaged students.

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